LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

D-Day for Peace
R.P.D.

May Day and the Fight for Peace
J. B. FIGGINS

Rabelais
T. A. JACKSON

May, 1953

One shilling and sixpence

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WELFARE, NOT WARFARE

WHAT a prospect this May Day, to seize the chance to curb the makers of war for good; and move on to make spring what it should be—the season of peaceful growth and construction. It seems hard to grasp fully just what this can mean. But a *Labour Monthly* reader from a bleak spot in Canada puts it very vividly: 'If peace overwhelms the "free world" and people are able to think in terms of life instead of death! It can lead to a fair chance for all to see which social order serves humanity best, capitalism or socialism. Peace and an expanding democracy; welfare, not warfare'. He goes on: 'Listening to the fumings of those who would bar the way to peace, one is staggered at the awful waste and contempt for life, this wallowing in all that goes for catastrophe when we are on the threshold of a great new era in which mankind can conquer poverty, fear and ignorance'.

It is fitting on May Day to pass on greetings we receive from all over the world. From Hawaii, too, there is a message: 'Aloha, and friendly greetings from some kindred spirits here. The *L.M.* is passed around, you may be sure'. Warm greetings, too, from a U.S. reader, who describes an incident when Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, one of the thirteen Communists condemned under the infamous Smith Act for teaching Marxism, was imprisoned for thirty days during the trial for contempt of court for refusing to name others. The ordinary prison inmates were dumbfounded by her, it appears, and she was the heroine of the gaol. A reader in Southern Rhodesia records her 'great appreciation', and a New Zealander sends a donation, his good wishes and the remark: 'Things are certainly moving fast'. And of course, there are greetings from readers everywhere in Britain, like the new Welsh reader who finds our magazine 'of great value in keeping abreast with international affairs and for encouraging a progressive outlook'. To match with him, one of our oldest readers in Lancashire feels 'it is a part of me after taking it all these years—and not the worst part of me, by any means. No other journal deals so adequately with the constantly recurring problems that beset the working-class movement in its progress towards socialism. May the power of *L.M.* grow and multiply until its wisdom permeates and envigorates the whole movement'. That indeed is a tribute from one who has spent many, many years in struggle for socialism. He and a reader from Scotland each describe steps they are taking to ensure that the demand for *L.M.* in their public libraries is met. That is most important; for as another North countryman writes, several of his friends hesitate to take the magazine because even 1s. 6d. comes heavy on the pocket. A Tees-side man was only able to renew his subscription 'by a stroke of good fortune, as I won the works' sweep of £3 last week'. With working-class budgets as they are, we know well how to value those who not only find the money to buy the magazine, but even scrape up a donation. Examples are from an unemployed Somerset man who finds *L.M.* 'indispensable to me, so I'll make this 1s. definite each month'; and a Gloucestershire engineer who leaves his 5s. donation to speak for itself. Never was there a time when there was more need for a magazine which to quote another Lancastrian, 'provides indispensable services for the working-class movement in these critical periods of "for" and "against", among the web of lies, deceit and confusion'. The work of the artist responsible for designing

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Notes of the Month

D-Day for Peace

'If we dig the tunnel of friendship from both ends, we are likely to meet earlier halfway. One cannot just wait at one end hoping the tunnel will reach you. You have to dig.'

A. Y. VYSHINSKY at the United Nations, April 8, 1953.

MAY DAY, 1953, will be forever memorable as the moment of the opening of the greatest battle for peace the world has seen. It is a battle which is being waged with an invincible energy, initiative, lightning simultaneity, resourcefulness and determination comparable only to the great offensives of the war which finally smashed fascism. All over the world new hope has blossomed in the hearts of the people—new confidence that the black overhanging

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nightmare of war and threatening catastrophe can be averted, that peace can be won. 'The hounds of spring' are indeed 'on winter's traces'. The ice has been broken. The seeming insoluble deadlock and jam has given place to renewed movement for a constructive solution. For this great change friend and foe alike have had to recognise that it is the indomitable initiative of the Soviet and Chinese Governments which has brought to mankind, at the very moment when the new plans for extending war and aggression were about to be launched, the perspective of peace. But we are still only at the beginning. Up to the present, from the side of the Western ruling circles, in contrast to the deep feeling of their peoples, there has come not a single answering action or concession. Gloomy panic fears of the economic consequences of peace; malicious interpretation and speculation; solemn warnings and re-affirmation of the war and rearmament plans—plenty. Actions for peace—none. The battle is only beginning.

Open the Second Front for Peace in the West

It is time to change this and enter into action. It is time to end the attitude of watching from the sidelines and speculating on the possible significance and outcome of the new moves—while the open wreckers, the Dulles and Adenauers, the Chiangs and Titos, like-minded politicians in Britain, and the war-drive profiteers work overtime to exorcise the spectre of peace. We are in this battle. It takes two sides to make peace. The next move is up to us. Britain's future is being determined by the outcome of this battle. The Soviet Union and China are leading from strength. They are leading for peace, not because they have any need to fear in the final result the ceaseless bellicose threats and plans of the Western powers, but because they seek peace and the advance of the mighty tasks of construction; they seek peace for all mankind. But Britain is in a very different situation. Britain is being economically ruined by the heaviest burden of military expenditure of any nation in the world; by ceaseless and extending colonial wars; and by trade bans which hit Britain hardest. If any nation has reason to clutch at a chance for a respite from the Dulles-Adenauer-Chiang policies of disaster, and respond eagerly to any moves for peace, that nation is Britain. Yet, in face of this unparalleled opportunity there has never been such a spectacle of craven bankruptcy of foreign policy since Neville Chamberlain as that displayed by the present Churchill-Butler-Eden Government. Alike from the Tory Ministers, and from their partners, the dominant Attlee-Morrison Labour

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leadership, there has come no trace so far of any statesmanship or positive response; only negative warnings and impotent subservience to the United States. The most active mobilisation of the labour movement and popular demand is necessary to change this situation. During the war the universal and justified demand of the British people for a Second Front in the West to parallel the mighty Soviet offensive which was smashing the Nazi armies had to hammer against the anti-Soviet reaction in top governmental and military circles. Today there is no less need to sound the demand for a Second Front in the West for Peace.

On the Edge of the Precipice

Recall the situation on the eve of the renewed peace offensive (how that one-time term of shallow vilification has boomeranged into a term of pride), which was prepared by the Nineteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and by the Stalin interview to the *New York Times* in December, and whose hammer blows have swept forward since the Malenkov statement of March 9 with daily renewed impetus, dominating and transforming the entire world situation. The illness and death of Stalin at the beginning of March plunged in grief the masses of the common people of the entire world, who mourned, not only the greatest leader of socialist and communist construction, but the leader of peace against a third world war. But what was the response of the Western millionaires? A ghoulish spectacle was revealed in the American and British millionaire press. 'Crisis in Russia.' 'Impending Breakdown in Russia.' 'Now is our chance.'

> In Washington the men around Dulles and Eisenhower have immediately begun talking of an aggressive effort to exploit the Soviet's situation—they would use all the tools of propaganda and more to encourage strife with Russia. (*Wall Street Journal,* March 3, 1953.)

Eisenhower had just launched his Formosa proclamation in February for extended war in the Far East and issued his orders to the cringing Eden and Butler for the blockade of China.

'In Moloch's Favour'

It was on these declarations of President Eisenhower that Premier Nehru, recognising the gravity of the situation, sounded a warning on February 18 with a degree of frankness of language unusual between Heads of States:

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> Certain statements made in the United States have caused grave concern. . . . They have had a very bad effect. This talk of a blockade of China is obviously not talk that leads to peace. . . . A soldier is excellent in his own domain, but, as someone has said, war is too serious a thing for soldiers to handle.

Under the title 'Midwinter Madness' that sensitive and responsible organ of moderate opinion, *The Times of India*, estimated that the scales had swung in favour of Moloch:

> President Eisenhower brings a military mind to bear on the problems of peace. Like many other soldiers he delights in hunting for peace with a gun. The scales of war now swing definitely in Moloch's favour.
>
> (*Times of India*, February 12, 1953.)

Such was the grave moment when the great peace offensive of the Soviet and Chinese Governments swung into action.

Leading From Strength

The multiple peace offensive led by the Soviet Government during March and April—whose intricate complexity, speed of action, and sureness of aim and timing sufficiently revealed that it had been elaborately prepared in its main outlines during the preceding months while Stalin lived—was manifestly launched from strength and not from weakness. Alike economically and strategically the Soviet and Chinese Governments were in an especially strong position. The confusion and disarray of the Atlantic camp, equally in the worsening economic situation, and in the contradictions and dilemmas of its strategy, were open and unconcealed. Every statement of the American Government leadership was complaining of the weakening hold upon the satellites. In respect of the war in Korea, General Bridgeford, the former Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in Korea, had blown the gaff when he stated in Melbourne on March 12 that 'it was now impossible for United Nations' forces to win the Korean War'. President Eisenhower's visit to Korea had only revealed the bankruptcy of his election promises to bring a speedy end to the war; and the substitution of his alternative plans for extending the war in the name of the unpromising strategic aim to make 'Asians fight Asians' was a strategy hardly calculated to arouse enthusiasm for the United States among the peoples of Asia. General Clark's visit to Vietnam had revealed the conflict of American and French imperialist interests. In Europe all the bullying by Dulles on his tour and his table-thumping ultimatum to the European Governments to ratify the E.D.C. war plan for Nazi rearmament by April 1 or forfeit all future American aid were not

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achieving their objective. In the economic sphere the contrast has been even more strikingly demonstrated by recent developments.

Prophets Confounded

Faded indeed and ageing are the files of the news-sheets of the Anglo-American millionaires during the early days of March which so confidently prophesied 'crisis' and 'breakdown' in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin. A little reprinting now might make even their brazen cheeks hot. During these succeeding weeks the Soviet Government has stood out as the strongest government and dynamic leadership in the whole world situation, bending events to the aims of human well-being. The active initiatives undertaken both in external and internal policy constitute a single whole. Every rampart of democracy in the Soviet Union has been strengthened, and faults in the security apparatus overhauled. By the end of March the sixth price reduction since 1947 of all commodities of general consumption was announced; and this price reduction exceeded in the aggregate amount the two preceding price reductions of 1951 and 1952 added together. This time, also, as a result of the more favourable diplomatic situation, the facts of the reductions were allowed to be made more widely known in Britain, so that the British citizen had the opportunity of learning that, while his beef and lamb had gone up 26 per cent. and 19 per cent., the Soviet citizen's had gone down by 15 per cent.; while his tea had gone up by 16 per cent., the Soviet citizen's had gone down by 20 per cent.; and while his bread had gone up 24 per cent., the Soviet citizen's had gone down by 10 per cent. A decidedly interesting practical comparison of the working of monopoly capitalism and socialism.

China's Economic Triumphs

At the same time the *United Nations Statistical Yearbook for 1952* was reporting that between 1948 and 1951 U.S.S.R. production had increased by 70 per cent., as against 15 per cent. for the United States. And by the end of March the *United Nations World Economic Report for 1951-52* was reporting that China had achieved in each of the years 1951 and 1952 an annual increase of 30 per cent. in industrial production and 15 per cent. in agricultural output, and that, with lower taxation and increased wages and farm incomes, the real income of the Chinese workers and peasants had been highly enhanced (a lesson here for India). The Chairman of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Sir Arthur Morse, at its

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annual meeting in March, had to admit, in speaking of People's China, that 'it would be a mistake to deny that great feats have been accomplished in railway construction and agricultural production'. The Budget of the Chinese People's Government for 1953 revealed an increase in revenue three and a half times the level of 1950 and an increase in expenditure on economic construction six times the level of 1950 (or a rate of increase six times the rate of increase of military expenditure in the same period, despite the Korean war); steel output to reach 23 per cent. above the preceding year; grain output to increase by nine per cent. on the preceding year and reach a total of 175 million tons (equivalent to more than two pounds per day per head of the population); and education to extend to 50 millions in elementary schools, 2,710,000 in secondary schools, 337,000 in technical training schools and colleges, and 580,000 in teachers' training colleges and universities. When these triumphs of economic and cultural progress in present-day China, during the three and a half years since the people have overthrown the yoke of imperialism and its satellite exploiters, are reviewed, let it never be forgotten that People's Korea could have today been showing similar triumphs had not the American Vandals brought devastation.

'Economic Hara-Kiri'

Even in the United States some of the facts of life have begun to compel recognition in certain quarters. Thus an article entitled 'Economic Hara-kiri?' by Professor William Yale in the *Christian Science Monitor* of March 9 made not insignificant admissions of the fiasco of the American 'Cold War' policy:

> Recently Adlai Stevenson made the startling statement that the rate of increase of production within the Communist orbit was twice as great as that in the Western orbit. . . . Modernisation of industrial and agricultural production in the economically backward countries of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, including China, would revolutionise the economic life of the world.
>
> The partial blockade of the West of the Communist orbit no doubt confronts that orbit with serious problems; on the other hand, it tends to act as a forced draft upon the process of industrialisation. At the same time, for the West the blockade is in the nature of economic self-denial as it limits exports of manufactured goods to the Communist orbit as well as the imports from it of minerals, raw materials and food. The question arises whether the blockade is more injurious to the Western orbit or to the Communist orbit. . . .

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Policies of the West apparently are being made largely on the basis of political and military considerations rather than economic ones. These policies are placing an increasingly heavy strain upon the economic systems of the Western nations which may in time defeat the aims of the policy-makers. . . .

Subsidised foreign markets and domestic markets supported by re-armament are not a solution of the economic and financial problems resulting from developments within the Communist orbit and the Cold War.

Decidedly the conditions are ripe, and more than ripe, for an advance to peace, not in the interests of any one particular group of nations, but in the interests of all nations.

Who Fears Peace?

Yet what has been the response so far of the Western rulers to the new perspective for peace opened out by the initiative of the Soviet and Chinese Governments? Let those oracles of 'western civilisation', the Stock Exchanges of New York, London, Paris and Tokio make answer.

On the New York Stock Exchange the news was unwelcome. Stock prices toppled, and aircraft shares were particularly hit (press, March 31).

Armament shares fell heavily on the London, New York and Tokio Stock Exchanges (press, April 1).

Wall Street and some international commodities became sensitive to the possibilities in the last week of March, and induced a corresponding weakening of equity prices in London on the eve of the holiday. Then, during the holiday week-end itself, came the sudden revival of hopes of peace in Korea, and on Monday last a pause on Wall Street gave place to a renewed fall, as speculation about the possible reaction upon the American business scene became more widespread. The Dow Jones index of American industrials dropped on that day by six points . . .

. . . sharp falls in the prices of tin, rubber, lead and zinc. Commodity prices in general have tottered rather than tumbled. Admittedly a bearishness—of Russian origin—has spread widely over the commodity markets.

(*Economist*, April 11.)

Tin, which had reached a peak of £1,550 a ton in the halcyon days of the height of the Korean slaughter during the first half of 1951, had dropped to £942 by March 24, and fell further to £865 by April 8. Decidely, the vultures fear peace. Their acts in the market place, where the masks are thrown off, are more eloquent than their words.

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Economics of Bedlam

O most worthy and venerated professors of economics in the universities of the West, so glib in your explanations of the smooth working and eternal laws of the marvellous economic system you are paid to defend, pray answer this little conundrum and set it as an examination question to your aspiring students. How can you defend an economic system where the hopes of peace, of the cessation of slaughter and destruction, arouse panic fears of ruin in the temples of your faith? Is not such an economic system damned in the sight of all decent men? Alas! So far from feeling shame, these apostles of the 'Western way of life' discern in the prospect of 'ruin through peace', not the crime of monopoly capitalism, but a wicked plot of the Kremlin.

> If peace in Korea should result in a scaling down of rearmament, the economic difficulties in the West might soon be considerable. A recession in America would cause havoc in British exports, and the dollar gap might again widen catastrophically. Britain cannot isolate itself from an American slump. The first result of declarations on Korea has been the fall on the Stock Exchange. Mr. Malenkov may be amused. (*Manchester Guardian*, April 6.)

And again:

> The City is growing nervous about the economic consequences of a truce in Korea. Everybody is asking: does it mean a slump?. . . .
>
> Already there has been a heavy fall in the prices of tin, lead and zinc, copper, rubber and some other commodities and prices on the Stock Exchange have been marked down. . . . The City . . . is taking Moscow's new policies seriously.

And again (in this former liberal organ, which once had the honour of editorship by C. P. Scott, that old fighter for peace before imperialism and war had become the ruling gospel) the open editorial complaint is directed against the wicked plotters for peace:

> If the Kremlin means peace there will be a serious risk of an economic setback in the Western world. If the new Soviet rulers still agree with the views that Mr. Stalin made public last year they may have considered this possibility. To upset a delicately balanced capitalist system which has come to rely a good deal on the stimulus of armament demand would be a worth-while gain.
>
> (*Manchester Guardian* editorial, April 10, 1953.)

What a state of mental disease has here been reached, which sees peace as a plot against an economic system that requires war for its sustenance, in place of seeing war as a crime against mankind.

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Wreckers

Nor have voices been lacking of open hostility to peace. While President Eisenhower maintained at any rate a measure of caution in public utterance, Secretary of State Dulles hastened to rush in with a series of bellicose proclamations, the usual reckless Goebbels-type vituperation against the Soviet Union ('heavily armed dictators . . . basically hostile . . . violence to gain their ends', etc.) and an advance announcement before any negotiating had begun, that 'nothing had happened or was likely to happen' to alter the policy of the Atlantic War Alliance, Nazi rearmament and the rest. He followed this up by a private statement to a Congressional committee on March 18—released on April 12—responding to the Soviet and Chinese peace moves by demanding increased American aid for the war in Vietnam, reinforcement of Chiang and intensified military measures in the Near and Middle East. He followed this up in the beginning of April by demanding, in the transparent and rapidly discarded guise of 'Mr. X', that Taiwan be detached from China and handed over to the permanent American ('United Nations') control, and that 'civil war' (i.e. American-backed aggression) should be promoted in China. General Mark Clark, American Supreme Commander in the Far East, announced his policy in a press conference on March 26:

> You can't separate the situation in Hong Kong and the Philippines from the wars in Korea and Indo-China.
>
> In my opinion there exists in Formosa a great military potential, and there is being developed a great strategic reserve which could be used well at the right times and right places.

A splendid representative to negotiate peace. This lead was of course vociferously followed by the Adenauers, Chiangs and Titos, all trying to throw in their spanner to wreck any menace of peace.

Where Does Britain Stand?

But the crucial question for us is not: What new mischief are the Dulles-Adenauer-Chiang-Rhee-Tito gang planning in the hope of wrecking peace? The crucial question for us is: Where does Britain stand? What response is Britain making to this supreme opportunity for peace? The visible answer up to the present is far from promising. It is true that the British Ambassador in Moscow was recalled for a quick consultation and returned to have a meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister; but it was sedulously explained (no doubt with an eye on the grim American overlord) that the only

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purpose was to take advantage of the favourable diplomatic atmosphere in order to clear up a few 'minor complaints'—the attitude of a petty calculator who has ceased to aspire to play any part in major events. It is true that American expression has furiously complained that British popular opinion is favourable to the Soviet moves for peace:

> Recent wavings of the olive branch over the Kremlin have been accepted by the popular press in Britain at what seems to be more than their face value. . . .
>
> The British public is responsive to overtures from Moscow. There has been an almost complete ignoring of the past, with an optimistic outlook for the future. . . . There is a real danger that any hitch in peace negotiations in Korea will be attributed to American 'warmongers'.
>
> ('British Press Won by Red Peace Talk', *New York Times*, April 3.)

But governmental expression has so far been negative. The traditional anti-Soviet hostility of the Foreign Office was openly expressed by its Under-Secretary:

> It would be foolish to imagine that Soviet basic strategy has changed. Can any one doubt that their ultimate aim remains to extend as widely as possible Soviet power and influence by seeking to foment unrest in Asia and Africa and to divide the United States from Europe, and in particular from Britain and her Commonwealth?
>
> (H. A. Nutting, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and former Chairman of the National Executive of the Conservative Party, speech on April 10.)

Munich is here out-Muniched in blindness to Britain's interests. The ill-timed ostentatious official reception to Tito in the second half of March (completely contrary to popular feeling: 'there were no cheers', *The Times*, March 17; 'relative silence surrounded Tito everywhere the public could see him', *Manchester Guardian*, March 23) was like the deliberate answer of British reaction and the Foreign Office to popular desires for peace and friendship with the Soviet Union.

Shades of 1939

The question is therefore urgent. Are we to see again the supreme chance for peace, opened out by the initiative of the Soviet Union, thrown away by the blind crass anti-Soviet hostility of British ruling class reaction and the Foreign Office, as in the spring and summer of 1939? Evidence has continued to accumulate that ever since the *New York Times* interview with Stalin in December, indicating the possibility of an Eisenhower-Stalin meeting, the outlook of British reaction and the Foreign Office has been obsessed by panic

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fear of the spectre of an understanding between the 'two giants' which would, in their view, leave Britain out in the cold. It is now widely admitted that the purpose of Mr. Churchill's sudden decision, within twenty-four hours of the *New York Times* interview, to fly to Washington was to endeavour to hinder direct Soviet-American negotiations. This interpretation, given in these Notes at the time (see 'Churchill, Eisenhower and Britain' in the February issue), has since been confirmed in the American press:

> The idea of a meeting between President Eisenhower and Premier Stalin has not been absolutely ruled out, although British Prime Minister Churchill during his recent visit counselled extreme caution in this regard.
>
> (Alsop Brothers, *New York Herald-Tribune*, January, 31, 1953.)

> President Eisenhower has yielded to the judgement of Mr. Churchill, reinforced by Mr. Eden, that to seek an exclusive Malenkov-Eisenhower meeting would alarm the N.A.T.O. allies, humiliate British public opinion, and terrify the French into thinking that a general agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union was to be bought at the expense of a European army and French securiy.
>
> (Alistair Cooke, U.S. correspondent, *Manchester Guardian*, April 1, 1953.)

Nightmare of the New Munichites

The spectre of the outcome of Munich in the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August, 1939, haunts the Foreign Office. After surrendering every British interest to Hitler as the grand champion of the anti-Soviet crusade, the Munichites found themselves faced with the Hitlerite double-cross in the shape of the Non-Aggression Pact, and thereupon declared war on Hitler as their reply to this 'supreme apostasy' (in the words of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, in his official booklet 'Why We Are at War'), and sought to take direct leadership of the anti-Soviet campaign. Once again Munichite Toryism and the Foreign Office, after surrendering every British interest to the United States as the grand leader of the anti-Soviet crusade, now live in panic fear of what they would regard as the American double-cross through an American-Soviet understanding. In place of boldly seizing Britain's opportunity to enter on immediate negotiations with the Soviet Union with a view to reaching British-Soviet co-operation to lead the way to a Five Power meeting and Peace Pact, which could remove the menace of a third world war, these representatives of reaction appear to imagine that their answer to this situation is for Britain to stand out as the only consistent reliable anti-Soviet champion and thus aspire to take over the glorious leadership of the rump of world counter-revolution. Hence the inauspicious choice of this moment to proclaim to the

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world with lavish ostentation that Britain has at any rate one ally —Tito. The same line has found expression in the puerile and vicious anti-Soviet polemics of a Gladwyn Jebb at the United Nations, or the ominous speech of Earl Alexander in the House of Lords. Up to the present Mr. Churchill has evaded questions, and has made no public declaration of action corresponding to his election pledges to take the active initiative for top level negotiations between the Powers for peace. Yet the testing time is now.

A Black Budget

Where is this crazy path of blind madness leading? It is certainly not the path to peace. But there is one outcome to which it is indubitably leading, and which is already making itself felt. That outcome is the economic ruin of Britain. In vain Mr. Butler seeks to brandish the figures of the surplus on the balance of payments last year as the proof of a wonderful 'recovery' from the colossal deficit of 1951—in exactly the same way as the Labour Government used to brandish the surplus of 1949 and 1950 as proof of the wonderful 'recovery' they had achieved from the preceding colossal deficit, until their surplus gave way to the new deficit. A surplus based, not on expanding trade, but on the wholesale cutting of imports by £423 million (three-quarters of this representing a reduction in the volume of imports, mainly of essential raw materials for industry), and on the increase of colonial sterling balances by £101 million, is obviously no expression of an improving economic situation. On the contrary, the real economic stiuation was shown in the decline of production by 3 per cent., and the decline of consumption, according to the official figures, by 1 per cent. A marvellous economic 'recovery' which expresses itself in falling production and worsening standards. The contrast with the rising production, all-round reduction of prices and rising standards in the Soviet Union and People's Democracies is inescapable. It is entirely in accordance with this peculiar Tory conception of 'recovery' that Mr. Butler's Budget should have still further raised the staggering figure of arms expenditure to the unexampled total of £1,776 million, at the same time as handing out gifts of hundreds of millions of pounds to the big monopolists, and maintaining all the main burdens of the cuts in the food subsidies and social services and the worsened standards of living for the masses of the people. The gravity of Britain's economic situation is not only in glaring contrast to the countries of socialism. It is also extreme even among the countries

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of capitalism. It is this gravity of the economic situation which makes all the more urgent the path of peace for Britain.

Initiative for Peace

The fight for peace which has now advanced to such a decisive phase throughout the world needs above all to be pressed forward here in Britain. The angry comments of the American official press have correctly sensed the strength of popular feeling in Britain for an ending of the war policies and for peace and friendship with the Soviet Union and People's China as corresponding to the true interests of the British people. The Easter Conferences of the trade union and co-operative organisations have further demonstrated this desire. But it is necessary to mobilise the power of the entire labour movement and of the widest active fight for peace in order to batter down the negative resistance and hostility of official circles, and compel that from the side of Britain there shall come a positive response to the initiatives for peace of the Soviet and Chinese Governments. One single action of Britain for peace—one single repudiation of the extended blockade on trade with China, or active public fight in the United Nations for the representation of the Chinese Government or call for a renewed conference for a united peaceful Germany in place of West German re-militarisation—would be worth more than all the millions of official words of tepid approval of the aspirations for peace, accompanied by practical resistance through making the first condition the necessity to carry forward unchanged the existing policies of war and rearmament, colonial wars and 'cold war'.

Next Objectives

Before all else the cease-fire in Korea needs to be won; and the possibility of winning it is now closer than ever before. Such a cease-fire in Korea needs to be the preliminary to a Far Eastern peace conference and settlement which shall include the rightful representation of China in the United Nations and the ending of hostile strategic economic measures. We in Britain have a special responsibility to bring to an end the barbarous wars against the peoples of Malaya and Kenya on the basis of a settlement which recognises the just demands of these peoples. We should endeavour to make the United Nations inclusive by the admission of the nations at present seeking admission and accepting its principles. In Europe there is still time to turn aside from the fatal path of the armed

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partition of Europe and of Germany, and open the way to a peaceful settlement on the basis of a united democratic Germany not tied to any military coalition. The vital economic needs of Britain especially require the ending of the crippling 'cold war' bans on international trade, and the fullest expansion of trade with the vast non-dollar area of the countries with expanding economies, which can help to ensure a stable basis for Britain's trade for many decades. Above all, Britain has the most favourable position and possibility at the present moment, and in the present situation, to take the initiative, with success, in calling for a conference of the Powers with a view to a general peace settlement and the all-round reduction of armaments. All these objectives are of common concern to all sections of the people. They are of national significance for Britain's future. Their achievement demands the united pressure of the entire labour movement and of all sections in all parties and none in order to mobilise the strength of the nation for these demands. The greatest moment of opportunity has now opened out to advance to these aims. Let us seize this opportunity with both hands.

April 15, 1953. R.P.D.

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MAY DAY AND THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

J. B. FIGGINS

NEVER before in the over 60 years' history of May Day with its appreciation of the potency of the international solidarity of labour, have the toiling masses had such substantial reason to feel supremely confident in their power to enforce peace and create the fundamental conditions for the advancement of their economic and social conditions throughout the wide world.

To get the present position into proper perspective it is important to examine May Day conceptions in retrospect. In this imperialistic age, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the trade unions and socialist parties agreed generally that national action alone was incapable of establishing reasonable hours of labour and conditions of employment on a permanent basis; and, above all, that only by the development of working class consciousness in the efficacy of independent political action on the international plane could war be prevented.

Those of us who were members of the socialist movement recollect with what deep disappointment we witnessed the collapse of the Second International and its complete failure to stem the strongly flowing tide of war in 1914. One could understand why among the trade unions there were found predominantly sectionalist and nationalist outlooks, but why one making claim to be a scientific socialist could be so was quite beyond one's comprehension. The explanation, however, was simple—this it is all important to understand and underline for the present and future—they were not in reality scientific socialists. It became clearer every day what an immense amount of socialist education had got to be undertaken if the workers were to comprehend what are the factors that move men to action and the supreme importance of scientific leadership.

The true socialists had been incapable of preventing the outbreak of the war but they were not dismayed. By skilful leadership the scientific socialists were able to take advantage of the conditions created by the war; and, when these conditions were aggravated by the reactionary militants and equally reactionary so-called socialists (who were responsible for the prosecution of the murderous July offensive of 1917 in Russia) the scientific socialists were able to win all power for the workers and peasants over one-sixth of the habit-

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able globe. The lesson was taught—but it is doubtful if it has yet been learned by the militarists and so-called socialists—that Revolutions are enormously accelerated by the blindness and stupidity of the enemies of Peace. Let both elements take note.

We hate war principally because of the criminal destruction of human life. That is why the pioneers of May Day made its principal aim the prevention of war. That is why we greatly value the inheritance, and will on May Day renew our pledge to unswervingly work for Peace and International Brotherhood and the creation of conditions that make such possible.

The Treaty of Peace of Versailles at the end of World War I was recognised by all socialists as containing the germ of future wars. Such was the wisdom of the statesmen. The labour movement was as yet insufficiently strong to take the requisite steps to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War, to which as yet there is no Peace Treaty.

Litvinov gave the lead which if followed vigorously by the western socialists would have preserved Peace. He expounded eloquently the conception that Peace was indivisible and the principle of collective security. Our dismal failure resulted in Hitler becoming bolder and bolder by occupying the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia and finally invading Poland which put the match to the gun-powder. He was encouraged in this policy by the Conservative politicians who thought Hitler could be trusted to fight the U.S.S.R. It turned out exactly the opposite as could have been foreseen. The Labour Party opposed the United Front and thus encouraged the Nazis instead of fighting for the principle of the May Day message of 50 years previously. The people paid the price of the folly of both.

Now we are at the 53rd anniversary when the prospects of our enforcing the establishment of Peace are very propitious. Indeed it is in our hands. We must not fail.

The statesmen of capitalist countries are faced with the insuperable difficulties. They have been compelled to acknowledge that their peoples demand Peace. America is no exception. Russia has, it is admitted by all, made the initial moves by comprehensive proposals which if positively and conciliatorily answered mean Peace. America has no longer a monopoly of the atom or hydrogen bombs of infinite destructive power which automatically transforms all our world's complex strategic relationships. It is not now, as the Americans fancied, saturating Russia's industrial areas. Ameri-

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cans are not now immune, with all that that means for not only America but Europe. This is not the pre-atomic age when triumphant victors enriched themselves on booty from the defeated. Such a war is not a possible policy for rational men.

The forces on the side of peace are world-wide. Not only is there a third of the human race in Russia, China and the Eastern European states; but, as we have to remember, the peoples of Asia and Africa are awakened. The attitude of India's Prime Minister Nehru should not be forgotten as a symptom of the strength of the peace movements in Asia; nor the signals for peace that come from the peoples of Latin America.

In Britain and all the countries of Western Europe, and also in the United States there is opposition to the war drive and voices that call for peace. How are they to be made effective? Everything depends on the activity of the labour movement. It must not be said of us in Britain that we, as in 1914 or as in those critical years before 1939, failed to make the fullest use of our opportunities to struggle for peace. A war would mean the destruction of civilisation. Our duty is clear from every platform this May Day: the demand for Peace negotiations must be made irresistible.

CALENDAR OF PEACE MOVES

QUÆSTOR

LAST month we wrote of the prospect that March, 1953, would be remembered as a month of tragedy for the British people, thanks to the rejection with renewed insults of the Soviet leaders' peace offers. If the situation nevertheless has swung steadily towards better possibilities, it is because of the stubbornness of the Socialist countries, headed by the Soviet Union. History knows no parallel for such obstinate, dogged salvage work for world peace, in the teeth of vile abuse and calculated provocation.

Consider the calendar from the moment our last survey ended.

March 16. Soviet delegate at Economic Committee for Europe (Geneva) proposed expansion of East-West trade and repudiated idea that U.S.S.R. believes in 'autarky'.

March 18. Molotov's Note promising to intervene for the release of British Civilian internees in North Korea.

March 19. General Chuikov, head of the Soviet Control Commission in Germany, proposes an Anglo-Soviet Conference on air safety problems.

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March 25. A main lock on the Berlin-West Germany waterways reopened, after being closed since last August.
March 26. Ten U.S. journalists admitted for a goodwill visit to Moscow.
March 28. The North Korean and Chinese Volunteer commands agreed to exchange sick and wounded p.o.w.'s, and proposed resumption of armistice negotiations.
March 30. Premier Chou En-lai proposed, to make armistice possible (i) handing over p.o.w.'s on both sides who insist on repatriation; (ii) handing over others to a neutral State 'to ensure a just solution'.
March 31. Soviet Union agreed to Western proposal of Dag Hammarskjöld as new United Nations Secretary-General.
April 1. Molotov announced full solidarity of the U.S.S.R. with Chou En-lai's scheme.
April 2. U.S.S.R. agreed to admit U.S.A. and France to Anglo-Soviet air talks.
April 3. French civilians in North Korea released on Soviet Union's request.
April 7. Zorin at United Nations suggested that U.S. ratification of the 1925 Geneva Convention prohibiting germ warfare would restore confidence.
April 8. Vyshinsky at United Nations listed recent Soviet 'deeds' for peace, and asked American and British delegates: 'Where are yours?'
April 9. Koreans and Chinese again called for resumption of full armistice talks (after signature of agreement on sick and wounded p.o.w.'s). Soviet Union promised to intercede for release of American civilians.

And how was this series of offers—the development of Malenkov's speech at the Supreme Soviet on March 15—met by the capitalist governments and newspapers of the West, more particularly by our own? The difficulty is not to find the answers, but to choose amidst their monotonous vulgarity.

March 26. Churchill again refused to promise M.P.'s that he would meet Malenkov. *The Times* (editorial) sneered at the Soviet 'propaganda campaign'.
March 27. Bidault and Dulles agreed in Washington that 'the likelihood of a meeting of the big four is too remote to be worth discussing'.
April 1. Churchill refused (in Parliament) to press for acceptance of Chou En-lai's offer.
April 3. Dulles denounced the U.S.S.R. as 'basically hostile to the rest of the world', saying its leaders 'don't recognise any moral law' and the Soviet offers 'haven't changed the basic situation'.
April 4. *Economist* (editorial) sneers at Soviet 'olive twigs' and 'mollifying gestures', saying they are device 'to gain time'.
April 5. Carrier-borne British aircraft, in the intervals between transporting Army chaplains to Easter services, carry out a 'record blitz' on eight Korean villages.

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April 6. *Manchester Guardian* (editorial) says 'we must now doubt' whether the Soviet Government is in 'a secure seat'. One of its Central European commentators explains that the Soviet Government is trying 'to salvage as much of Salin's empire as possible'. Its Washington correspondent compares Vyshinsky to Scrooge.
Daily Telegraph (editorial) insults the Soviet people as 'conditioned serfs' and demands 'solid major concession to the West'.
Daily Express (Delmer) writes of the 'cowed servility of Soviet citizenry'.

April 7. *Daily Telegraph* (editorial) sneers at the 'brandishing of Moscow's olive branches'.

April 10. Gross, U.S. delegate at United Nations, attacks the U.S.S.R. for 'violating obligations'.
Nutting, Under Secretary, Foreign Office, tells his constituents that the Soviet Union's 'ultimate aim' remains to extend its power 'as widely as possible'.

April 11. *Economist* (editorial) sneers at Vyshinsky 'cooing gently at the United Nations' and repeats last week's idea that 'the Kremlin's gestures to the outside world must be interpreted as signs of a crisis within Russia'.

Need one enlarge the nauseating catalogue? No—but perhaps it is as well to remind ourselves that all these Ministers, delegates and journalists in reality speak the voice of a single master. Already on April 6 the New York correspondent of *The Times* reported the 'unsettling influence on business sentiment and on markets' of the Soviet proposals, and the *Manchester Guardian* Washington correspondent explained that 'a Soviet olive branch is a palpable threat to American prosperity'. Here is a further selection:

April 8. *The Times* (Stock Market review) reports widespread losses owing to 'fresh uncertainty over the possible economic impact of a settlement in Korea'.

April 10. *Manchester Guardian* (editorial) admits that 'the capitalist system has come to rely a good deal on the stimulus of armament demand' and says that 'if the Kremlin means peace there will be serious risk of an economic setback in the western world'.

No more eloquent confirmation was needed that the interests of peace and the interests of monopoly capitalism are constantly in conflict—or, as Lenin said, that war is 'terribly profitable'.

Luckily, monopoly capitalism is not monarch of all it surveys. The peoples have learned—from the Soviet, Chinese, Czechoslovak and numerous other examples, not to speak of the way the British Councils of Action stopped war on Russia in 1920—that they can say a word or two themselves, and that, if they say it loudly enough, their word is the mightiest force in the world. Amidst a large

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number of resolutions passed by trade union branches and district committees, local Labour and co-operative organisations and meetings, the following stand out:

April 1. Nearly 100 Labour M.P.'s table a motion welcoming Chou En-lai's proposals, as opening the door to peace.

April 4. Yorkshire Federation of Trades Councils, in annual conference at Leeds, unanimously welcomes the Chinese proposals.

April 5. Distributive Workers' Conference, Scarborough, appeals to the United Nations to accept them. Co-operative Party Conference, Southsea, welcomes the new moves.

April 6. Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen do the same. Scottish Miners' Executive likewise.

April 7. Distributive Workers' Conference calls for direct Anglo-Soviet discussions with a view to a meeting of the Great Powers.

April 14. National Conference of Labour Women, Edinburgh, welcomes the new initiatives.

April 16. Labour M.P.'s at Parliamentary Labour Party meeting, demand pressure to break the Tory Government's obvious 'sit-down strike' against the Soviet Union's and China's peace moves.

But, at the time of writing, it is clear that much more than this must be done if the chance of eliminating the international war clouds—and restoring the single world market, advocated by the U.S.S.R. leaders—is to be taken. There are unmistakable signs that the idea peddled so insistently by the *Economist*—that the Soviet offers are a sign of 'crisis in Russia'—has caught on.

Thus, a kind of competition developed in April as to who could demand *more* concessions from the U.S.S.R., as a proof of its sincerity—without of course offering the slightest concession in return. One might almost imagine that the Socialist countries were defeated and broken suppliants, begging for mercy. For example:

April 7. *Manchester Guardian* demands that the U.S.S.R. desists from its 'outrageous' criticism of Western governments—but in the same issue repeats its usual attacks on Soviet internal affairs.

April 8. *Daily Herald* demands that British journalists be free to 'send home their uncensored impressions'—generously overlooking its own frenzied fairy tales about Soviet internal affairs, over a number of years.

The Times gives special prominence to a letter demanding that Polish organisers of sabotage and wrecking against the Soviet armed forces in 1944 be released—but forgets to mention the Rosenbergs, innocent victims of a typical American frame-up.

April 9. Adenauer and the U.S. Government demand that German prisoners of war still in the U.S.S.R. (for war crimes) be released —but forget the thousands of Soviet children deported by the Nazis and still unlawfully detained by the American and British authorities.

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April 10. Sir Harold Cacchia, British representative in the Allied Council for Austria, *first* votes down a Soviet proposal to ban the white-washing 'memoirs' of Hitler's chief diplomat, von Papen, and *then*, when the Soviet representative won't agree to an extra teletype cable for the Austrian Government, impudently asks why the Russians won't apply Vyshinsky's plea at the United Nations to 'dig a tunnel of friendship' (a plea which the Anglo-American delegates rejected).

April 11. *The Times* (editorial) makes a thinly-veiled demand that the U.S.S.R. should accept West-German rearmament as a condition of peace.

Economist (editorial) insists that a condition of any settlement be 'withdrawal of the Red Army from Austria and Germany'—but that in West Europe there should continue to be an 'adequate Allied army and air force'!

Let the reader remember that all these demands came from a side which had, for its part, offered not a single conciliatory gesture in response to those from the countries of socialism and People's Democracy—and in fact had responded, in most cases, with jeers and insults.

But perhaps the most barefaced example of all was the speech of President Eisenhower on April 16. True, the very fact that it took a different tone from the bullying and bellicose tones of his (and his lieutenants') utterances two months ago is an unwilling tribute to the strength of the demand for peace welling up in all the countries of capitalism, the United States not least. In this lies the real element of any change which the speech represents. It reflects the beginning of a struggle between the war-makers of American imperialism and those 'more sober-minded and progressive politicians' of whom Malenkov spoke at the 19th Congress of the C.P.S.U. last October—and whom the peace-loving countries, as he promised, will undoubtedly support. Yet the speech at the same time shows how strong are the forces which want to sabotage any chances of peace, continue their vain effort to bully the U.S.S.R., and go on making profits out of the peril of war.

Eisenhower demanded, as conditions of negotiations for a wider settlement, the signature of a treaty with Austria ignoring the Soviet demand for an *agreed* settlement (instead of Anglo-American dictation) in Trieste, the economic outlet for Austria and other regions of Eastern Europe. Eisenhower demanded an armistice in Korea and 'free' elections for a united Korea—without one word as to the system of joint supervision of such elections and the guaranteeing of genuine freedom in South Korea, or the withdrawal of foreign troops who could easily influence the elections, which the Soviet Union and China long ago proposed. Eisenhower wanted

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guarantees against Chinese support of the patriots fighting the foreign occupying armies in Indo-China and Malaya—but never a word of the arbitrary, treaty-breaking American occupation of Taiwan (Formosa) and support of Chiang Kai-shek, or the refusal to seat People's China in the United Nations. Eisenhower demanded the release of German prisoners of war in the Soviet Union, approval of the armament of Western Germany and the 'freedom' of East Europe countries (to overthrow the Socialist system they have established and reinstall the capitalist system). But he did not say one word—as both *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian* had to admit next day, in different terms—about the withdrawal of American forces in Western Europe, or whether he repudiated the oft-repeated threat to 'liberate' Eastern Europe by force of arms, or to revise Germany's eastern frontiers at the expense of the Polish and Czechoslovak peoples. No, 'the whole question of Eastern Europe must be reopened', writes the loyal champion of American policy in Britain, the *Daily Telegraph*.

Even a cursory review of the Eisenhower speech, therefore, shows how powerful are still the illusions that the Soviet Union is in a state of 'crisis', and must swallow anything the Americans like to dictate. Unless those illusions are dispelled, cruel disappointment —and worse—awaits the world. We need not doubt the Soviet Union's capacity to dispel them. But the sooner the British working class comes into action, demanding (i) an end to attempts to dictate to the U.S.S.R. and People's China; (ii) immediate armistice and peace negotiations in Korea; (iii) direct Anglo-Soviet talks for extended trade; (iv) an end to German rearmament by a Five Power agreement, the more effectively a peaceful world settlement at last will enter the realm of probability.

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FRANCOIS RABELAIS

(Born 1483: died, April 9, 1553).

T. A. JACKSON

FOUR HUNDRED years ago, almost to the day, died Dr. Francois Rabelais, immortal as the author of the *Lives, Heroic Deeds and Sayings of Gargantua and his son Pantagruel;* a book of which every literate person has heard, and which not a few have in fact read. Two reflections follow from this fact: firstly that it is surprising that so short a time as less than five centuries separates us from a period so seemingly archaic as that reflected by Rabelais. Secondly that Rabelais died peacefully in bed in Paris, happy among friends; and not as so many contemporaries died, burned at the stake amid the howls of a priest-maddened mob.

On an absolute scale, four hundred years—plus the seventy he is supposed to have lived—gives an inconsiderable fraction of the total life-period of Humanity. Yet what a swirling of the seas around Sandy Hook there has been since Pantagruel, and his companion Panurge set out upon their Quest for the Holy Bottle and the Saving Oracle that went therewith?

Rabelais was outstanding among the heralds of a new social order:—the sweeping-away of all the accumulated rottenness and rubbish of the time-and-priest sanctified feudal order, with its exhilarating promise of enormously-magnified social opportunities that sweeping-away held out to all mankind. Yet now, less than five centuries later that 'new' order—revealed as a monstrous caricature of itself, a hideous falsification of its every promise—is visibly threatened at a score of points: demonstrably in process of being swept away in its turn. The official defenders of this 'new' bourgeois order, panic-stricken with hate and fear, go through all the contortions of the 'hobgoblins' and 'furred-cats' against whom Rabelais directed the shafts of his devastating derision.

So far nobody in the U.S.A. seems to have detected Francois Rabelais as a 'fellow-traveller' with the Communists. That somebody will do so before long is certain. The country that cannot bear up under the physical presence of Charlie Chaplin could hardly survive even the ghost of Francois Rabelais. Which brings us to the point that he did in fact contrive to die peacefully among friends.

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RABELAIS — *Illustrations*

GARGANTUA

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Gustave Doré

Above : The Furred Law-Cats ; *Pantagruel* "The Furred Law-Cats are most terrible and dreadful monsters . . . nothing can get from them what is once fast between their clutches. Sometimes they cover their heads with mortar-like caps, at other times with mortified caparisons."

Right: Contes Drolatiques. Council of the rats and mice in Gargantua's cellars.

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That the bigots wanted to burn him alive is undoubted. But why they should want to do so is not obvious to a modern.

Taken at its face-value, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is just another chronicle and romance about huge, good tempered giants, whose appetites for food and drink are enormous even for giants. And incidentally they and their attendants and companions get up to antics that even charity must classify as coarse and lewd. Much of the humour moves at the level of grooms in a stable, or of countrymen building a dung-hill. And at that level, it must be conceded that Francois Rabelais frolics in the dung as joyously as any unredeemed country-urchin.

That, however, operated as an *alibi*. Rabelais had powerful friends at Court—the King of France, Francois I, and his sister Margaret, Queen of Navarre, among them—who knew all about the lusts of the flesh from exuberant practice as well as extended theory. They were able to browbeat the affronted theologians—the official defenders of Propriety—into seeing in Rabelais nothing but a buffoon. It might be deplorable in a learned cleric to be quite as enthusiastic in praise of gluttony, wine-bibbing, bawdiness, and coarse jesting as Rabelais was; but after all if you are going to burn people just for being unedifying, where are you going to end?

Thus it was that Rabelais was able to escape. But the aggrieved theologians were more nearly right than they had the wit to prove. Let it be remembered that Rabelais was, as his enemies knew only too well, one of the most learned and progressive scholars of his time. He was an enthusiast for Greek studies at a time when those who could really read Greek were as rare as white blackbirds. He was not only a highly-qualified and successful medical practitioner —itself a thing remarkable—but he was a pioneer of the 'new outlook', the method of 'putting the question direct to Nature'. He is credited with being the virtual founder in France of the experimental sciences of anatomy and botany. And all this on top of being qualified in theology as well as the Canon and Civil Law.

For such a man to turn his back upon the tradition of the Schoolmen and instead produce works modelled upon the lewd fables recounted by the cottage fire or on the ale-house bench was in itself a major scandal. Before the Renaissance the minds of all men aspiring to culture were constrained within a rigid framework of dogmatic theology. The central pivot upon which this system turned was the assumption that there was nothing new to be

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learned, since everything essential had been revealed. Moreover, since this life was at best an ante-chamber to eternity, the sole purpose in life was to keep on the right side of the Church which had it in its power to determine the future of every individual. To suggest in the teeth of this gloomy dogma that the life of the flesh and of the material world was, after all, well worth living and rejoicing over was, rightly interpreted, the profoundest heresy possible.

It is a major irony that the mental prison house of theological domination was broken by the logical consequences of one of its basic dogmas. If, as theology maintained, men had been, originally, perfect, but had, since the Fall, steadily degenerated, it followed that the older a culture the more near it was likely to be to original perfection. The re discovery of Greek culture, since it offered a better insight into this original perfection could not be resisted by the Church. But, as was inevitable, the scholars of the Renaissance could only interpret Greek culture in terms of their own time and experience. Thus when they thought they were merely recapturing something that had been forgotten, they were in fact revealing to themselves a new and magically-enlarged world in which dogmatic theology had no place, and in which joy in living took the place once usurped by the ever-present fear of hell.

In this connection it is noteworthy that in taking-over the tales of genial giants with enormous appetites Rabelais linked himself with a vital substratum of the Keltic-Iberian culture. At a tribal level of society the gods of enemy peoples take on the function of 'devils' to the people who do not worship them. Gloomy theological imagination as it gained authority equipped these 'devils' with horns, hoofs, tails and pitchforks, and so turned them into terrifying nightmares. The not-yet-theologised Keltic tribes, took over the gods of the regions they over-ran and turned them genially into giants—harmless to everybody but themselves—or even later, into the fairies, the 'good people' who inhabited the hollows of the hills. In adopting the old gods in their new disguise of genial giants, Rabelais took over the popular tradition which had always refused to believe—despite the priests—that there was anything sinful in being happy, anything wrong with enjoying life to the utmost. The priests who scented in Rabelais more than a suspicion of fundamental paganism were, ideologically, on the right track. That is why it is so very good a thing that they were defeated and were not able to burn Rabelais along with his book.

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Let us concede that Rabelais was a buffoon of the very first rank —and that there be worthy folk who have no taste for buffoonery. But let them remember that if world literature were weeded of its buffoons from Aristophanes to Bernard Shaw it would be a very much poorer thing than it is. What would English literature be without Chaucer, Shakespeare, Fielding and Dickens—to name no more? And is it not obvious that the buffoon by pouring ridicule upon some pretender in so doing exalts the repute of the opposite of that which he derides? It is noteworthy that while he mocks pretenders, hypocrites, pedants, and solemn humbugs wherever he finds them, Rabelais does so only to glorify genuine learning and a genuine enthusiasm for the best life has to offer. Most of the life-time, first of Gargantua, then of his son Pantagruel is spent at a university genuinely engaged in diligent study. It is true there is much mighty eating and much gorgeous drinking, as indeed, why not? But critics curiously miss a notable point about Rabelais' ideal scholastic establishment the Abbey of Theleme. That its rules—there is only one: Do what you will!—exactly reverse the practice of all theological foundations has been noted. But how often is it observed that while we are given a glowing description of well-stocked libraries, splendid art-galleries, and music rooms, magnificent architecture and radiant lawns, gardens, and playing fields, not a word is said about a kitchen or a wine cellar! So much for the amiable pretence that Francois Rabelais was nothing but a glutton and an insatiable sot.

We may interpret the Quest of the Holy Bottle and its Oracle—the magic formula of 'drink'—in a similar fashion. The wine we are urged to drink, and drink deep is the wine of human knowledge —the true knowledge of Man and of Nature which the priests had done their damnedest to deny to men; the knowledge which will not only enlarge man's sympathies to embrace everything essentially human, but will also multiply their power of creating a new heaven and a new earth.

Hate ignorance, he says, in effect: hate the hypocrites: hate cruelty. Study the physical universe and the moral universe of man and his infinite potentialities. Learn the laws of Nature that you may obey them and them alone. Drink deep of the fountains of knowledge: drink truth: and with it the confidence in mankind's ability to win, gloriously, a Future for itself. Such is the gospel of Francois Rabelais: who, being dead, yet speaketh to those who have ears to hear.

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VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

GEORGE HARDY

AMERICAN violence, as practised for over a century by the ruling class of the United States, is a trail of blood and tears, strewn with martyred dead. It stretches across the U.S.A. from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from its Northern to its Southern border, and far beyond. As a country of many nationalities, employers have systematically played upon sections of the workers to destroy their class unity as a method of deepening total exploitation. Whenever this has become unbearable, whenever courageous men and women could not bear this terrible exploitation any longer and have become a serious challenge, then, white, yellow, brown or black, they have been met with violence, imprisonment and torture, and on innumerable occasions death, legally inflicted and otherwise.

Internally and externally, before and ever since the Constitution was born in violence, expanding U.S. capitalism has 'progressed' by corruption, fraud and the shedding of human blood. They dispossessed the Indians of their native lands; by duplicity, manipulation and fraud, they gained possession of land allocated to the men who fought and won for them their independence. Swamp lands were disposed of to eager settlers, which disgusted Charles Dickens during his short visit to America, and which he describes in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. During the period of railway expansion, they appropriated to themselves miles of the best land, situated on both sides of the railroads, financed mainly by British capital. Not satisfied with normal trading relations in produce and raw materials of the Caribbean countries, they launched in 1898 the Spanish-American War. A reign of terror became the lot of the common people of Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Philippines.

'Liberty' and 'human rights' are misnomers when used by American imperialists. They are used to indoctrinate their own and other undiscerning people. It is a lie when they speak of human rights. Such words are used to cover their crimes in pursuance of imperialist aims abroad and the use of physical violence at home. Under such conditions the class struggle in the U.S.A. has progressed through generations of hideous torture and death. Down through the years in this ghastly record the struggle has taken its toll in blood and lives of those who fought for human rights and working-class justice.

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If we go no further back than times that are within living memory, we can recall the Chicago martyrs for whose lives William Morris and others in this country raised their voice in protest. It was during the great agitation for the eight-hour day in 1887 that a strike took place at the McCormick reaper works at Chicago. At a peaceful public meeting, attended by the strikers, an *agent provocateur* threw a bomb that killed the chief of police who was in attendance. This was the signal for arrests. Spiers, Parsons, Engel, Fischer, Ling and Schwab were charged with murder. Ling committed suicide while awaiting trial. Despite the obvious frame-up and in the face of a world-wide agitation, these men, having taken a prominent part in the strike, were convicted of a crime they never committed. Spiers, Engel, Parsons and Fischer died on the gallows in the Cook County jail. Schwab received a life sentence. Later, the State Governor of Illinois, Altgeld, after carefully reviewing the evidence, released Schwab, declaring him innocent, as those were who died on the gallows—victims of a most violent bloodthirsty ruling class.

From my own personal knowledge, I continue this deadly record:

1912.—25,000 long-suffering textile workers came out on strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts. All mills were closed. The strike was complete. Solidarity was unprecedented. A nation-wide campaign brought enormous support. The I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) was in the leadership. An Italian girl striker, Anna La Piza, was killed by a policeman, and a Syrian boy was stabbed in the back with a bayonet. Two of the organisers, Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovanitti, were charged with murder, notwithstanding they were both addressing a meeting two miles away at the time. To behead the strike these men lay in Salem jail for seven months. Having a perfect alibi they were finally released. Police, thugs and militia freely used their weapons against the unarmed strikers, mostly women. But the strike was won against almost every form of violence.

1913.—A strike of hop-pickers took place on a millionaire's ranch at Wheatfield, California. Working in an exhausting temperature of over 100 degrees, conditions were unbearable. Water was inadequate. No sanitary provision. Wages low. Two I.W.W. organisers were on the job. Demands were formulated and presented to the owner, whereupon he slapped them across the face with his gauntlets. The pickers gathered to hear the report. In the meantime the employer sent in a riot call. This brought the Sherriff and his armed deputies to the scene. In an attempt to disperse the

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strikers they physically assaulted one of the girls and menaced the workers with their firearms. During the struggle an enraged worker killed one of the armed deputies. But it was Ford and Suhr who stood trial for murder and received life sentences. This is how innocent men are imprisoned for life in U.S.A.

1914.—During a miners' strike against the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co.—a Rockefeller concern—armed forces were brought in. To break the strike the miners were forcibly evicted from the company-owned houses. They appealed for help. This enabled them to erect tents and continue to fight for a victory. One night the troops, using a favourable wind, set fire to the tent colony by pouring kerosene oil over the canvas homes of the women and children. Many were burnt to death. Pickets were thrown around the New York offices of the Rockefellers, poster parades and mass protest meetings aroused the nation.

1915.—This was the year, when on November 15, they judicially murdered Joe Hill, the song-writer and union organiser, whose spirit lives on in the song: 'I dreamt I met Joe Hill last night', made popular throughout the world by that great and beloved American —Paul Robeson.

1916.—Two outstanding struggles took place—the strike of the iron ore miners on the Masaba Range, Minnesota, and the battle for free speech at Everett, in Washington State. The former was against the U.S. Steel Corporation, with its boundless record of violence. Armed police, company gunmen and hired thugs were brought into action. One gunman shot a Finnish worker with a baby in his arms. A worker avenged this death—a gunman was shot. This was made the occasion to arrest the leaders. Sam Scarlett and others were charged with murder, tried and acquitted. But only after the worker had pleaded guilty. However, Sam, who was an effective orator and organiser, was not to go scot free. Without a tittle of evidence against him he was linked up with a conspiracy against the government and sentenced to 20 years.

Later that year, following a strike at the lumber mills at Everett, the authorities, at the instigation of the Commercial Association, denied free speech to the I.W.W., who had done trojan service during the strike of shingle-weavers organised in the A.F. of L. When it was found arrests were ineffective the mill owners resorted to violent methods. In league with the authorities the Commercial Association enlisted thugs who were enrolled as deputy sherriffs. On October 30, forty workers were taken from a boat as it arrived

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from Seattle. They were forced into cars, taken out of town and mercilessly beaten with gun butts, black-jacks and pick handles. Undaunted, these courageous workers decided to return in greater numbers and hold a protest meeting. Over 300 set forth from Seattle in a chartered boat, the 'Verona'. A spy of the Pinkerton Agency tipped off the time of arrival at Everett. Sherriff McRae and his deputised 'patriotic citizens', including the Mayor, hid in the dock-sheds, from which they opened fire into the crowded men on the boat deck. Under fire, the boat backed out. But already five men had been killed and 50 wounded. Others who fell over the side into the water were never seen again. Thus Abraham Rabinovitch, Gerlot, Looney, Baran and Johnson were the victims of mass murder.

1916 was the year Tom Mooney was framed. An active leader of the street-car workers, he could not be bribed. He had to be got rid of. In total disregard for human life, even of their own supporters, a bomb was planted during a parade in support of war preparations. It exploded and killed demonstrators. But notwithstanding that Tom Mooney established a perfect alibi he was sentenced to death. In face of a world-wide protest, the sentence had to be altered. He was given life imprisonment. He was kept in prison 18 years, long after witnesses against him had confessed to perjury.

1917.—This was a year of intensive class struggle. Strikes took place in mining, lumber, shipping, agriculture and other industries. As now, war hysteria was whipped up among wide sections of the people and directed against the organised workers, and particularly the militant I.W.W. Cases of violence are too numerous to give space to each. Therefore the following will sustain the record of violence. During the struggle for shorter hours in the metal mines, troops were brought into Phoenix, Arizona. They carefully prepared to round up discontented miners. They were taken from their homes at night and forced at the bayonet point, to enter a waiting freight train. They were taken into the desert of New Mexico, and without food, water or any accommodation, forced to remain there for a considerable time. At Tulsa, Oklahoma, a number of militant oil workers were taken by organised thugs, acting for the oil trust, by car into the woods. They were stripped naked; tied to trees and brutally lashed with rope-ends soaked with salt brine. Tar was rubbed into their bleeding backs. They were released and left without clothing in zero weather.

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In autumn, 1917, came raid after raid throughout the U.S. In September every office of the I.W.W. throughout the country was raided on the same day and at a fixed hour. Every movable article was loaded into trucks and taken away. From the documents stolen the Federal Department of Justice concocted a conspiracy case. 113 were arrested. After eleven months in jail, including the trial of 138 days duration, 93 received varied sentences from one to 20 years. To secure the convictions every principle of common decency and judicial practice was thrown to the winds. In the press the defendants were described both prior to and during trial, as committing every conceivable crime. Over 30 bags of mail were deliberately withheld by the postal authorities throughout the preparations for the trial. Defence witnesses were intimidated with threats of violence prior to testifying. After notice of appeal had been given W. D. Haywood applied for bail. But to prevent this, while he was in court making the application a bomb was planted at one of the main entrances of the building. The explosion killed four people. These innocent people died to prevent the defendants receiving bail.

Butte, Montana, dominated by the Copper Trust, has been the scene of many crimes against the miners in their struggle for wages, conditions and human treatment. A city of more than 100,000 people, where miners, by their arduous toil, have contributed enormously to extend the riches of the copper millionaires; where the permanently hired army of gunmen employed by the Anaconda Copper Company are a law unto themselves. Should the exasperated miners be forced to strike, they face an army of thugs and gunmen whose regard for human life is nil.

One of the most atrocious crimes, which is but a deadly parallel with many spread across the history of metal mining in the Western States, followed a disastrous fire in the Speculor Mine, in which 175 miners were burned to death. The company had built concrete bulkheads across the only exits the men had, after they were cut off from the shafts. This was the cause of a general strike. Troops were immediately brought in, and the miners sent for outside help.

Frank Little, one of the Union's organisers, a veteran of many struggles involving violence, use of troops and company gunmen, arrived and addressed a mass meeting of miners. To maintain solidarity and emphasise power of unity he said: 'Don't mind Uncle Sam's scabs in uniform, they can't mine copper ore with bayonets'. During the night they took him from his bed in his

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pyjamas, tied a rope round his neck, and fastened to a high-powered car, they dragged him through the streets to a railway tressle, and there they hung him.

These cases are typical of thousands of others. Space excludes a succession of them. But during my term as General Secretary of the I.W.W. 1,500 members were imprisoned, a measure of the magnitude of the violent class struggle. Call to mind Sacco and Vanzetti; the Scotsboro Boys; and Willie McGee: thousands of lynchings by frenzied mobs officially supported. These poor victims died because their skins were black. Now the case of the Rosenbergs echoes against the crime of judicial murder of this young couple, as humanity proclaims their innocence. Through generations of violence the U.S. workers have fought on. They will continue to do so. They will fight for their human rights; for decent and honourable international relations, inherent in so many peace offers of the Soviet Union, both before and since the death of Stalin. The fight to end war in Korea extends: also the fight for a Five Power Peace Pact. U.S.A. will ultimately take the Socialist road—the road U.S. imperialists fear most.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

THE POGROM ATMOSPHERE

The endeavour to create a pogrom atmosphere against the Communists by the "discovery" of sensational plots and conspiracies is the conventional bourgeois device for avoiding discussion on the real issues and concealing them from the eyes of the workers. . . . The bourgeoisie, realising the menace of Communism to the continuation of its system of class government, desires above all to prevent the Communists from obtaining the leadership of the masses and developing the struggle against the bulwark of the existing order of state apparatus. The Secretary of the T.U.C., not only completely identifies himself with this line of thought, but extends it to the point of regarding the trade union as the bulwark of the State. Mr. Citrine's identification of 'democracy' in the unions with the interests of the existing bureaucrats is as significant as is his identification of the trade unions with the capitalist apparatus. Although nowhere is he rash enough to argue in support of his assumptions that the struggle against the bureaucracy is the same as the struggle against the unions, and that the minority has no right to carry on organised work in order to become the majority, these two assumptions are the essence of his articles.

From *Mr. Citrine and Trade Union Democracy*, by John Mahon, May, 1928.

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AN EPIC STORY*

WILLIAM GALLACHER

FOR a short two-and-a-half years after the First World War there was a boom in trade followed by a slump and a steady increase in unemployment. A general attack on the living standards of the workers became the order of the day. It started with the miners. Early in 1921 controls imposed during the war were removed and the mineowners made an immediate attack on the miners' wages. Mining is the basic industry, with the miners as they were, the vanguard of the working-class movement. Defeat the miners, force them down and the rest of the workers can be dealt with in detail. That was the policy of the Tories then, it is the policy of the Tories today.

Consider, eight years after the Second World War, eight years of crisis for the capitalist system, 100 Tories launch an attack on the present form of nationalisation of the mines, while Churchill and his Yankee masters watch the effect of this trial balloon with the closest attention. 'Regionalise' is their cry. For generations the miners fought for national agreements. Stubbornly the mine-owners, supported by the ruling class as a whole, imposed upon them district agreements, which kept them always divided. The Tories, speaking for capitalism as a whole, want to go back to that. 'Regionalise' is simply a new term for 'District agreements'. If this could be accomplished not only the miners but the whole working-class would be weakened and laid wide open for attack.

'The wages of all workers must come down'. Not only do the capitalists desire this—the Americans have ordered it. Butler must take measures to reorganise 'internal economy'. He has promised to do so. But standing there, sure and strong, blocking the way to an all round attack, are the miners. Through years of bitter struggle they have built up a union, more unified, more powerful than ever before in their long tragic history. Can the leadership be corrupted and can this powerful organisation be broken up? That is what the Tories are concerned with.

During our life-time the story of the miners struggle is the story of the working class as a whole with lessons that all of us must learn. In view of this, there was never a more timely production than the

* *The Miners: Years of Struggle.* A History of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain from 1910 onward, by R. Page Arnot. (Allen & Unwin. pp. 566. Illustrated. 35s.).

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second volume of the official history of the miners. Technically it is an amazing book. I have not in many years seen a finer: truly a credit to the publishers. But it is the content we are most concerned with, however much we admire the artistic excellence. No richer store of vivid working-class experience has ever been brought together in a single volume. It is the official history of the miners, but it brings in transport workers, railway workers and, through the Trades Union Congress, the whole working class. It represents a living embodiment of Marxism. It demonstrates all through its pages the correctness of the Marxist analysis of capitalist society, the ruthless character of capitalist exploitation and the intense and unrelenting nature of the class struggle. Only a Marxist like R. Page Arnot could have written it and done justice to this great body of workers and the great and often dramatic, as well as tragic, contributions they have made to the progress of the working class. When we look at them now, through the pages of this book, let us remember that years ago, the miners, isolated in communities established around the pits, were looked upon as a sort of 'submerged tenth' and accordingly treated with scant respect by the coal-owners and the 'superior' people throughout the country. From these days of neglect and contemptuous indifference to the present position of recognition and respect, there is a history of struggle, of hardship and heroism unsurpassed in the annals of any other walk of life.

This second volume, *Years of Struggle,* far more valuable than the 'Memoirs' of leading statesmen or military chieftains, deals with the period from 1910 to the aftermath of the titanic struggle that followed the betrayal of the General Strike. It was during this period that the miners steadily consolidated their forces and pressed forward to become the most powerful force in the industrial life of Britain.

Don't just read this book, *study* it. How easily the ruling class can create the fiction that all progress, all 'benefits' have come from above! Lord Shaftesbury: Who hasn't heard of the 'great philanthropist'? But long before he introduced his important legislative measures, the fight had gone on without ceasing in the minefields, against the most intense opposition of the mine-owners and their allies. And the fight had to go on after this remedial legislation, for even after Acts were passed their proper administration was continually avoided or where they were operated it was only through the vigilance of the miners and the strength of their organisation in the different districts.

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Consider this that happened forty years ago. 'The Coal Mines Act had been passed in 1911. Two years later there occurred at the Senghenydd Pit, in Glamorgan, the worst explosion in the history of coal-mining in Britain. On October 14th, 1913, no less than 439 lives were lost in this pit'. (Page 51). An enquiry was held and a report issued. So blatant were the infractions of the law that the Home Office was forced to take action. Through its Divisional Mines Inspector for Wales it prosecuted the mine-owners and manager. The case came before three local magistrates. They immediately dismissed the charges against the owners; and of seventeen charges against the manager, found him guilty of five. They imposed fines for each of these five charges, the highest fine being £10, the others £5 and £2. 'The local Labour paper headed its report "Miners' Lives at 1s. 1¼d. each".' (Page 53).

Yes, miners' lives were cheap in the eyes of the pampered ruling class of Britain. If there is a change today it is not because of any softening on the part of the exploiters; it is—as the Foreword puts it—because of 'the power of organisation to protect and advance the welfare of the working class'. And as you go through the pages of this truly great history, great in its magnitude, great in its lessons, not only for the miners, but for workers everywhere, you see stage by stage the building of this powerful organisation.

In the same way the Churchills and their kind have always tried to create the impression that the miners, however evil their conditions might be, were quite contented with their lot and were only led astray by a 'handful of Extremists'. Well, take the chapter on the first national strike, the strike which more than anything else drew the Federation together and made it into a real national fighting force. Never was there a greater example of working-class democracy. Read of the conferences called at the different stages of the struggle, of the ballots which reached as high as eight to one in favour of strike action; it not only exposes the fiction of a 'handful of Extremists', manipulating the organisation, but it is also an exposure of the fact that a 'handful' of reactionaries are manipulating many of our important unions today. They certainly would never agree to the measure of democracy to be found through all the struggles of the miners as revealed in this entrancing history. Nor would Churchill and/or Attlee dare to take a ballot in such a way as the miners' leaders did, on the subject of peace or war against the countries of socialism, or on American domination and American occupation troops.

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It should also be noted that as a result of this first great national struggle, thousands of miners realised how they had been duped by the hypocritical pretensions of the Liberal government. That lesson was drawn by the Marxists, including the mightiest Marxist of them all, Ilyich Lenin, at the time, and history has amply proved their judgment. In the same way the industrial and rent battles during the First World War, ended Liberalism in Glasgow and throughout Scotland as a whole.

In all these struggles the government and the press have always been rigged to serve the interest of the exploiters. Brutal is the ruling class, when brutality looks like paying. At other times, cunning, courteous—corrupt and corrupting, smug-faced and treacherous, always seeking for division, either in the leadership or the ranks and using it for the undoing of the workers. All these methods have been used against the miners. Asquith, Lloyd George, and Baldwin were all masters of cunning and deception. Churchill, even before 1914, did not shrink from violence. There was his drafting of police and troops under General McCready to the Rhondda in 1910—all vividly pictured here. But it was in the events leading up to, and during the General Strike, that the vicious hatred of this man Churchill for the working class was fully evidenced. Miners' M.P.s in parliament should remember when he talks of a 'show-down with Russia' (a working-class country) that it was this same Mr. Churchill who wanted 'a show-down with the miners' and prepared for it. In August 1925, when the miners with the full backing of the T.U.C. threatened a stoppage if their wages were reduced, Baldwin gave a nine-months' subsidy to the coal-owners to keep wages as they were for nine months. During that nine months the government made every possible preparation for a 'show-down'. Churchill was the supreme commander in this historic phase of the class war, on the side of the capitalists; provocation after provocation. For he knew that no preparation of any kind was being made by the General Council, and that their supreme command, Thomas and Bevin, were men of straw so far as a real class battle was concerned; and up till the last moment these two and the others on the General Council hoped against hope that somehow or another they would get out of their pledge to support the miners. But the rank-and-file of the working class were determined to remain loyal; and Churchill, very well prepared, forced them to a 'show-down'. Nine months of betrayal during which nothing was done, then nine days of a General Strike and open and

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complete capitulation and betrayal on the part of the General Council. But despite this terrible set-back, the long seven months' struggle which the miners had to face kept the spirit of the working class alive and prepared the way for new advances. All through that terrible seven months period their most implacable enemy was Churchill. Amongst their best friends were the miners of the Soviet Union. That was as it should be. It is something the miners and others of the working class should never forget.

In these pages we find, too, vivid pictures of the personalities of those who gave leadership to the valiant miners. There is the great soul Robert Smillie, for years excluded from the vice-presidency because he was a socialist; the wretched betrayer Frank Hodges, who as a junior Minister of MacDonald's Government gained contacts with the financial world and so found his way out of the labour movement into the banking fraternity and the ranks of the mine-owners themselves; here is the fiery Welshman A. J. Cook, who headed them in the days leading up to the General Strike and seven long months of heroic struggle, indefatigable in agitation in the coalfields.

Of this second volume the *Manchester Guardian* reviewer admitted that Page Arnot had done a brilliant job, but he thought that he was too hard on the capitalists. No, sir. It is not Page Arnot who is 'too hard' on them; it is the facts. The facts expose their cunning, their trickery, their treachery and their crimes. Page Arnot is a Marxist, a brilliant Marxist, as the reviewer admits, and as such he marshals the facts in such a way that they speak for themselves. Through these pages you see the miners standing up heroically against the most enormous onslaughts of the ruling class and their venal politicians and equally venal press. You see the right-wing leaders of the T.U.C. cringing and cowardly, desperately afraid—and afraid above all of a working-class victory over the exploiters.

There are many lessons to be learned from this great volume, but the greatest of these is the lesson of leadership. Working-class unity with a leadership strong, resolute, unafraid—a Marxist leadership—that is the combination that will bring sure and certain victory for the workers. Once they get leadership adequate to their strength, the days of capitalism will be numbered. That is what the pioneers set out to achieve. That is what we must accomplish; and this great book, this second volume of the history of the miners, will be a mighty weapon in the carrying out of this historic task.

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THE GENERAL STRIKE, 1926

J. V. STALIN

(Speech at a meeting of workers of the main railway workshops at Tiflis. June 8, 1926. Continued from last month.)

WHAT are the lessons of the General Strike in Britain, at any rate the most important of them? These lessons amount to the following:

First. The crisis in the mining industry in Britain, and the General Strike linked with it, raise foursquare the question of socialising the implements and means of production in the mining industry, with the establishment of workers' control. This is a question of winning Socialism. It is hardly necessary to prove that there are not and cannot be any ways for the radical solution of the crisis in the mining industry other than the way proposed by the British Communist Party. The crisis in the mining industry and the General Strike bring the British working class face to face with the question of the practical realisation of Socialism.

Secondly. The British working class could not but experience at first hand that the chief obstacle on the road to its aim is the political power of the capitalists, in the present case, the Conservative Party and its Government. Although the General Council feared like the plague to admit the indissoluble connection between economic struggle and political struggle, the British workers cannot now fail to understand that, in their difficult struggle against organised capital, the question of power is now the main question, and that it is impossible to solve either the crisis in the mining industry or the crisis in the whole of British industry, in general, without solving the question of power.

Thirdly. The trend and outcome of the General Strike cannot fail to convince the working class of Britain that Parliament, the Constitution, the King and other attributes of bourgeois power are nothing but the shield of the capitalist class directed against the proletariat. The strike has torn aside the covering of a fetish and sacred shrine both from Parliament and from the Constitution. The workers will realise that the present Constitution is a weapon for the bourgeoisie directed against the working class. The workers cannot fail to understand that they, too, need their workers' Constitution as a weapon against the bourgeoisie. I believe that

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learning this truth will, for the British working class, be one of its most important achievements.

Fourthly. The course and outcome of the strike cannot fail to convince the working masses of Britain of the unfitness of the old leaders, of the unfitness of the old heads who have grown up in the school of the old British policy of compromise. They cannot fail to understand that the old leaders must be replaced by new, revolutionary leaders.

Fifthly. The British workers cannot fail now to understand that the miners of Britain are the vanguard of the British working class, that support for the miners and securing their victory is, therefore, the concern of the entire working class of Britain. The whole course of the strike dictates to the British working class that this conclusion is absolutely unquestionable.

Sixthly. The British workers, in the difficult moment of the General Strike, when the platforms and programmes of the various parties were being tested in action, could not but realise that the only party capable of boldly and resolutely defending the interests of the working class to the end is the Communist Party.

These, in general, are the lessons of the General Strike in Britain.

I now proceed to a few conclusions which are of practical importance.

The first question is that of the stabilisation of capitalism. The strike in Britain has shown that the resolution of the Communist International on the passing and temporary character of stabilisation is perfectly correct. The attack of British capital upon the British miners is an attempt to transform the passing, temporary stabilisation into a durable and permanent stablisation. This attempt was not and could not be crowned with success. The British workers, who replied to this attempt with a gigantic strike, have shown the whole capitalist world that the permanent stabilisation of capitalism in the conditions of the post-war period is impossible, that experiments like the British are fraught with the danger of the destruction of the foundations of capitalism. But though the assumption of the firmness of capitalist stabilisation is false, the opposite assumption that the stabilisation is past and done with, and that we have now entered a period of great revolutionary upheavals, is equally false. The stabilisation of capitalism—passing, temporary, yet nevertheless stabilisation—so far still remains.

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Further, precisely because the present passing, temporary stabilisation still remains, for that very reason capital will try and attack the working class. Of course the lesson of the British strike should show the whole capitalist world how risky for the life and existence of capital is an experiment like that which was undertaken by the Conservative Party in Britain. That the experiment will not be without effect upon the Conservative Party, of that there is no reason to doubt. Neither can it be doubted that this lesson will be taken into account by the capitalists of all countries. Nevertheless, capital will all the same endeavour to make a fresh attack upon the working class, for it thinks its position insecure and cannot but feel the need to make itself more stable. The task of the working class and of the Communist Parties is to prepare their forces to resist such attacks on the working class. The task of the Communist Parties is, while continuing the organisation of the united working class front, to bend all their efforts towards transforming the attacks of the capitalists into a counter-attack of the working class, into a revolutionary offensive of the working class, into a struggle of the working class for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the abolition of capitalism.

Finally, the working class of Britain, in order to fulfil these immediate tasks, has first and foremost to get rid of its present leaders. You cannot go into war against the capitalists with such leaders as the Thomases and MacDonalds. It is impossible to hope for victory with such traitors in the rear as Henderson and Clynes. The British working class will have to learn to replace such leaders by better ones, for it is one of two things: either the British working class will learn to remove the Thomases and MacDonalds from their posts, or they will no more see victory than they can see their own ears.

These, comrades, are the few conclusions which are obvious in themselves.

Mrs. Cristina Philipps, for many years a valued friend to *Labour Monthly*, died on March 21, 1953.

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Book Reviews

JOURNEY TO KOREA

That's Why I Went, by Monica Felton. (168 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *6s. 6d.*)

THIS book is in essence an account of Mrs. Monica Felton's visit, with a number of other women from different countries, to Korea in the summer of 1951. The visit confirmed her reputation for integrity and courage and brought about her dismissal from an important government post. (No doubt the Minister thought that as virtue is its own reward the virtuous need no other.) It is a remarkable book, both in its merits and its minor weaknesses. One of the latter is the time it takes Mrs. Felton to get us to Korea. One is almost halfway through the book before she and her colleagues set foot in Korea; for myself, I was beginning to feel that the title 'That's Why I Went'—not a very good one anyway—should have been 'That's How I Travelled'!

Mrs. Felton went via Prague, Moscow, Siberia, and China, and she gives us many glimpses of life in those towns and countries. As I read all this, my main feeling was one of impatience to get to Korea. Nevertheless, I was compelled to admire not only the very high quality of the writing, but also the evidence of insight into simple truths. In Moscow, for example, she records her colleagues' interjections, 'How happy everybody looks', and 'Those are men and women who look as if the future belongs to them', and adds for herself: 'That was it. They were not arrogant; but they looked as if they owned the world they lived in and as if they loved it too'. For these various merits, I was content not only to wait for the long journey to Korea to finish but also to pass over one or two accounts of internal 'Delegation' disputes that did not contribute much to the story.

When, finally, we reach Korea, Mrs. Felton achieves slowly, quietly, a masterpiece. It takes one a little while to absorb the work, and to realise what she is doing and how well she is doing it. She maintains a very high quality of writing in her description of people, of scenery, of events. She never, as it were, raises her voice or strives for effect. She tells her story evenly, almost gently, achieving her effects with the softest brush-work.

What is more important than the quality of writing or the quiet artistry of the story-telling, is the essence of the story. What is her story? What is the lesson that she insinuates into the reader's mind? As it touches me, it etches as few other writers have done—Von Kleist did it in Michael Kohlhaas—these important truths:—

The horrors of war are terrible enough anyway, but the horrors of futile unrestrained, bestial war as carried on by the mechanised degeneracy of the rulers of America, and accompanied by collective and individual savagery devoid of any conceivable military justification, are infinitely more horrible than any war known before fascism in its various forms was developed; they would appear to be literally unendurable if people had not endured and survived them;

The evils of the fascist 'master-race' and 'colour-bar' theories are worse in their effects than most of us ever understood before, for the way in which many Americans maltreated the Koreans could not be explained by the mere degeneration effects of war, even this kind of war, and is only conceivable

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on the basis that they have been taught to regard coloured people as less than human;

The patience, the courage, the almost too great capacity for endurance and survival, of ordinary people everywhere, can triumph over the immeasurable horror and pain and suffering and grief that such bestial war brings;

There lies in these simple human beings a mighty reservoir of culture and industry and creative talent, held inert by capitalism and gloriously released by Socialist rebirth;

The dangers involved in allowing even the smallest risk of such a war continuing and spreading are so great that all our efforts everywhere, to insist on peace should be redoubled.

This book is, in truth, a powerful piece of anti-war propaganda, beautifully written, well told, and worthy to be read by everyone.

D. N. PRITT.

WORKING-CLASS NOVEL

Betrayed Spring, by Jack Lindsay. (450 pp. Bodley Head. *15s.*)

THIS is an unusual and welcome novel about ordinary working people living ordinary lives in post-war Britain. Jack Lindsay seeks through personal experiences of three returned soldiers and their circles, to tell how the people lived and what they thought during the first years of the Labour Government elected in 1945. He passes from London to Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Tyne, with their varied industrial and local scenes. We feel the strength of the miners and the portworkers, the hope and frustration of the London squatters and the Savoy strikers, the degeneration of the opportunist trade union official.

The book is very refreshing in its closeness to the people and in the scenes of everyday life which we feel are true because they have often happened to us. But the political discussions are not so real as the sketches of daily life. While the general impression emerges of a fading away of hopes, the clash of the two trends in the organised Labour Movement does not stand out. None of the characters had the good fortune to come into contact with Marxism, neither does the collective life of the organised movement come into the picture.

Jack Lindsay has done something very courageous and ambitious. One puts down the book with the feeling that there is more to come and with an interest in the further fate of the characters. When the author gives us people who express their politics as naturally as they do the other things, he will give us a novel which would indeed be a powerful force in the advance of our people.

JOHN MAHON.

NATIONALIZATION

Problems of Nationalized Industry, by W. A. Robson. (390 pp. Allen and Unwin. *25s.*).

IN the days of Keir Hardie, Tom Mann and other political pioneers of that period the word Socialism had one clear meaning—the common ownership *and control* of the means of wealth, production and distribution and the end of Rent, Interest and Profit. But the leadership of the Labour Party, from Ramsay MacDonald to Major Clement Attlee, have so distorted the policy of the Movement that they would have us believe that we are, in fact, today living under socialism in Britain, particularly expressed in our nationalized industries—and the B.B.C.

To those who question the lavish compensation and annual Interest

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paid to the former owners of nationalized industries, Professor W. A. Robson in his book says, 'We must regard the obligation to pay interest on compensation stocks as a necessary concomitant of nationalization under democratic socialism, despite its manifest disadvantages'. He then proceeds to make the astonishing statement that, 'No really satisfactory solution of the compensation problem has yet been found; and it is possible that none will ever be discovered'. (p. 291). How astounding! Has the Professor never heard of what they did in Russia in 1917?—or in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania and Poland when those countries set up their Socialist Governments after the liberation from fascism?

On the subject of the composition of the boards of control in the nationalized industries he says: 'I believe we should reject the idea that the members of the Boards of public corporations should be professed socialists or adherents of the Labour Party'. (p. 94). Further, he says, 'The record of Municipal trading is quite significant. . . . It shows that some of the most successful gas and electricity undertakings were developed and operated by councils whose members were predominantly conservative, in outlook if not in name'. He rebukes those who advocate 'direct representation of the employees or their trade unions' on the Boards of nationalized industries.

He thinks the salaries ranging from £8,500 to £5,000 per year, paid to the Chairmen of these Boards are 'broadly reasonable'. In fact, he claims that they are 'well below what would be offered by commercial companies of similar magnitude'. That may be true, but he should remember that the people do not expect the ethics of private commercialism to be the criterion in nationalized industry. High salaried men are not necessarily the most capable and efficient administrators, as the very condition of these industries prior to nationalization clearly showed. In fact, Robson himself confirms this, when, in writing about the coal industry he says that 'Nationalization . . . was adopted only after numerous other expedients to improve the economic and technological condition of the industry had been tried and failed. The elimination of private ownership was a surgical operation which had become necessary to save the life of the patient'. (p. 280).

He praises the governing boards of nationalized industries on the way they 'have taken their obligations towards organized labour with the utmost seriousness'. 'Indeed', he says, 'one of the most promising features of the situation is the fact that the boards and the chief executives have shown every sign of understanding the immense importance of the labour problem and the need to adopt a new and creative attitude towards it'. (p. 340).

As a trade union officer who has had to meet these authorities in national negotiations about wages and working conditions, I can only conclude that Professor Robson is expressing an opinion without having had any actual experience in this matter. If he had been present at any of the conflicts which I have been involved in with some of these control boards he would have realized that one of the main troubles in nationalized industry with its present set-up is, that the people at the top are very largely the same persons who previously represented private ownership and

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that they still apply the same mentality in their dealings with the workers. That is why socialist inspiration finds no real expression amongst the workers on the job. The boards and the executives are just another employer to them. They cannot feel any sense of joint management because it has never been extended to them. In this subject I would advise Professor Robson to enquire more closely into the labour relationship in British nationalized industries and compare it with the position in industry in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. He would learn much.

But although this book contains many statements which provoke challenge, and many more ideas which the true socialist must reject, it is, nevertheless, a very useful publication in respect to general information about the structure and administration of our nationalized undertakings. Actually it is not a book by a single author. Half of it consists of chapters on special aspects of the problem by twelve other writers, including, G. D. H. Cole, Ernest Davies M.P., Professor Arthur Lewis, Professor Gilbert Walker, R. H. B. Condie and A. M. F. Palmer. Much valuable data will be found in this book to support the case for revision of control and an end to the lavish compensation and interest charges which have become such a handicap in nationalized industries and a burden on the British taxpayer.

WAL HANNINGTON

RUMANIA

Rumanian Summer by Jack Lindsay and Maurice Cornforth. (152 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *5s.*)

JACK LINDSAY and Maurice Cornforth were both members of a delegation which visited Rumania last summer, and this book is the fruit of that visit. In a few weeks, the two managed to visit almost every region of Rumania, from the Black Sea Canal, the great socialist project, to the mountains where the Stakhanovites go for free holidays as a reward for their work.

Rumania in the past was a hotbed of racial hatreds: it is still an incredibly varied mixture of nationalities. But having visited Hungarian, Serb, German, and many other areas of the countryside where different nations, languages and cultures predominate, Lindsay and Cornforth are able to say the hatreds are no more. The brotherhood of man, through the co-operative work of building a richer and happier country, has replaced them already. Much of the story of how this is being done comes through personal interviews with a large and varied assortment of people—child pioneers, church leaders, collective farmers, shock workers, engineers, doctors, local councillors, old professors whose liberal views are able to be expressed openly for the first time in their lives. This gives the book the ring of truth and human interest. But the writers used their eyes too, and some of the best pictures of a truly happy and confident society are descriptions of scenes in the streets of Bucharest on Liberation Day, in villages and cafes and beside the Black Sea, where nobody knew or cared who was there to observe them.

Two writers so different as Lindsay and Cornforth provide readers interested in style with some entertaining contrasts. Some chapters of this book bring together carefully accumulated and detailed economic facts—and one recognises the work of Cornforth; others break out in rich colour, and poetry, and one says 'Ah, Lindsay'. The combination

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provides a well-balanced diet. The book is admirably illustrated with a large number of photographs to reinforce the text. P.J.W.

WOMEN'S WORK

Not Like This, by Jane Walsh. (144 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. *7s. 6d.*)

TODAY'S generation has no idea of the appalling poverty and misery that the workers suffered during the late 1920's and early 1930's. This book symbolises the life that was led by thousands of working women during that period of shameful history. Jane Walsh was brought up during the dark days of depression, mass unemployment and means tests, and her description of the experiences she underwent should make a very vivid impression on the reader with any imagination. The book is written with a simplicity and courage that will arouse the hatred of all progressive thinkers towards those who were responsible for the sordid conditions and degradations that were the lot of the working class all over Britain during that time.

What a pity, though, that a woman of Jane's courage and tenacity did not link herself up with those sections of the working class in their fight against the means test and the strikes that were taking place at that time (especially in the Lancashire textile areas). What a source of inspiration she would have been to those women who took their part in the hunger marches from Lancashire demanding work or full maintenance. The battle still goes on and it is women like Jane that we need in our movement. I say "Welcome" to Jane; and use your great gift in the struggle to make the world not only safe from war and poverty for *your* children, but for all the children of the working class.

BEATTIE MARKS.

PRETENTIOUS HUMBUG

Sociology of Communism, by Jules Monnerot. (336 pp. Allen & Unwin. *30s.*)

ONE is tempted to paraphrase a famous saying: Without doubt it would be possible (given a sufficiency of initial stupidity reinforced by malice, and applied with diligence) to produce a sillier book about communism than this one; but equally without doubt, nobody ever did. At first glance it offers itself as a large lump of erudition, presented with much parade of scholarly caution and critical reserve—a mass so solid that one is grateful to the translators for omitting one-third of its original bulk. But when this mountain has surmounted its pangs of parturition, what emerges is—everything alleged by Senators McCarran and McCarthy as a 'reason' for hotting up the cold war to explosion point.

It may be merely a coincidence: but when a spate of books all designed to denigrate the Soviet Union, and all focussed especially upon the (alleged) wickedness of Stalin, appears soon after the allocation by the U.S.A. of a big heap of dollars to 'promote psychological warfare' against Communism and Socialism, the coincidence seems too complete to be entirely fortuitous. This book, for instance, with a little adjustment of names and epithets could easily be turned into polemic against Wall Street imperialism and the 'secular religion' of the American Way of Life. Did it perhaps start out that way: and change its direction when the wind proved favourable? It is bad luck for the author that Stalin has departed this life. He will have to rake up some new mud to throw at Malenkov.

T.A.J.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

Russia's Lomonosov, by Boris N. Menshutkin. Oxford University Press. 208 pp. 25s.
The Future of Nationalisation, by H. A. Clegg & T. E. Chester. Blackwell. 212 pp. 12s. 6d.
The Crisis of Britain & The British Empire, by R. Palme Dutt. Lawrence & Wishart. 512 pp. 25s.
Koje Unscreened, by W. Burchett & A. Winnington. Published by the Authors. 174 pp. 1s.

PAMPHLETS

Poems from Clydeside. Communist Party Scottish Committee. 20 pp. 6d.
Agrarian Crisis in India & the Reactionary Plans. Bhowani Sen. People's Publishing House, Bombay. 100 pp. Rs. 1/4.
The Polish Co-operative Movement. British Polish Friendship Society. 36 pp. 6d.
Children in the British Colonies. Nat. Committee for the Defence of Children. 22 pp. 6d.
Ibn-Sina. F. D. Mansur. People's Publishing House, Lahore. 32 pp. 6 annas.
Report to the XIX Congress of Amendments to the Rules of the C.P.S.U.(B). N. Krushchov. Collet's. 38 pp. 2d.
Directives of the XIX Party Congress for the Fifth Five-Year Plan of the Development of the U.S.S.R. in 1951-1955. Collet's. 42 pp. 2d.
Social Services Under the Tories. Labour Research Department. 8 pp. 4d.

CONTENTS OF PREVIOUS NUMBERS IN 1953

JANUARY: *Twenty Years On*, R.P.D.; *Trade Unionism in* 1953, Peter Kerrigan; *Africa in Ferment*, Desmond Buckle; *Impressions of China: New Democracy*, Benjamin Farrington; *The Forrestal Diaries*, D. N. Pritt, Q.C.; *People's Democracy in Countries of the East, I*; BOOK REVIEWS: *Introduction to Marxism* (Emile Burns); *Readers' Guide to the Marxist Classics; China Today* (Sundar Lal) reviewed by James Klugmann, W. J. Ellerby; *Drawings*, Mazzullo.

FEBRUARY: *Churchill, Eisenhower and Britain*, R.P.D.; *The Geneva Convention*, 1949, J. Platts-Mills; *At Vienna I Saw Peace*, Jean-Paul Sartre; *The Rents Offensive*, Katherine Hood; *People's Democracy in Countries of the East, II*; *A New Town in Poland*, George Bidwell; BOOK REVIEWS: *U.S. Foreign Policy* (Walter Lippmann); *The Critical Years* (G. Von Schweppenburg); *Economics of Peace and War* (John Eaton); *Plot Against Peace* (Ivor Montagu); reviewed by Andrew Rothstein, Henry Purcell, Stanley Evans.

MARCH: (Marx 70th Anniversary Number): *Marxism After* 70 *Years*, R.P.D.; *The Great Discussion*, George Matthews; *On a U.S. Ambassador*, Karl Marx; *Zionism*, Andrew Rothstein; *Impressions of China*: *Education*, Benjamin Farrington; *Trials and the Press*, Pat Sloan; *People's Democracy in Countries of the East, III*; *Facsimile*: The Minutes of the First International, May 23, 1871.

APRIL (Stalin Memorial Number): *Stalin and the Future*, R.P.D.; *Tributes to Stalin*, I J. Nehru, II D. N. Pritt, Q.C., III William Gallacher; *Stalin's Legacy*, James Klugmann; *The General Strike*, 1926, J. V. Stalin; *Mr. Eden Kow-Tows*, Quæstor; *Cold War Against Britain*, Cmdr. E. P. Young, R.N. (Ret'd.); BOOK REVIEWS: *America Over Britain* (P. Bolsover); *Brother Bill McKie*, (Philip Bonsky); *Quakers Visit Russia* (Kathleen Lonsdale, F.R.S.); *England in the Late Middle Ages* (A. R. Myers); *England in the 17th Century* (M. Ashley); reviewed by J. B. Figgins, W. Gallacher, A.R., L. F. Marks, A.L.M.

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covers and illustrations always wins praise, but never have we enjoyed finer work from his drawing board than the two successive numbers of March and April—a very fine drawing of Karl Marx (which earned us a special donation), and the magnificent four-page design for the Stalin memorial number. Every reader I have met these last weeks spoke of it: 'smashing', 'wonderful', 'quite outstanding', 'we could sell it on that alone'. (Circulation-raisers, please note. Here's a champion back-number to use as specimen copy).

THE HUGE FAMILY

A Northumbrian congratulates 'all who helped in any way to publish the most splendid and inspiring April number, and showed the love and respect held for our dear comrade. Reading some of the vile things said about him by certain capitalist newspapers made my blood boil; but it was gratifying to know that even these haters of everything he stood for and devoted his life to had to admit his greatness'. Many were the messages we received about the death of Stalin, 'father, brother, teacher and comrade in one—what a huge family he was leading toward abundance'. A West country reader 'feels that such men last for ever'. Another was struck by how his death 'draws all peaceful, hopeful people together, as grief and love from countless millions of people like me goes out to the Russian people and to workers everywhere.' It showed 'how the web of lies can be broken through'. And one last quotation, from a London teacher: 'Of all the tributes that have been paid, none in my opinion surpasses that of Palme Dutt. Not only is it a masterly analysis of what Stalin has meant to the peoples of the world struggling to a better life, but it is a vibrant call to action which we cannot ignore'. Let us end on that call to action this May Day, 1953.

Donations received during March amounted to

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OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS include: I. Shaw, 2s.; L. R. Borsley, 2s.; W. J. Fairman, 3s.; R. G. Benians, £3; G.M. (U.S.A.), 11s. 2d.; I. Stead, 2s.; E. E. Cripps, 2s.; D. L. Evans, 2s.; D.N.L., 11s.; L.B. (S. Africa), £1 6s. 6d.; E. M. Addyman, 2s.; W. Jackson, 2s.; F. B. Williamson, 7s.; B. W. M. Goldbloom, 12s.; R. J. Brown, 3s.; G. M. Lea, 12s.; D. O'Kane, 'In Memory of J. V. Stalin', 5s.; B. Latham, 2s.; M. Watts, £2; H. Levitt, 4s. 6d.; 'Blacksmith', 2s.; D. Stewart, 2s.; J. Nation, 5s.; P. Evans, 2s.; M. R. Mann, 4s.; M. P. Barrass, 2s.; M.M.C. (Canada), 10s.; L. G. A. Clark, 2s.; S.D., 2s.; R. H. Baker, 12s.; J.G. (S. Africa), 16s. 6d.; M.W.R.D. (Canada), 14s. 9d.; L. V. Wells, 12s.; S. Jones, 12s.; C. Walker, 7s.; L. Conley, 1s.; N. L. Dodsworth, 2s.; C. G. R. Smale, 2s.; S. W. Conning, 7s.; M.W. (U.S.A.), 7s.; J.H.F. (U.S.A.), 10s. 6d.; R.S. (Canada), 10s. 9d.; A.G. (Canada), 10s. 6d.; C.H.R. (U.S.A.), 14s.; H.G.S. (Canada), £1 15s.; 'For the fine drawing of Karl Marx, on the March cover', £2 2s.

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